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PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FUTURE PROGRAMS OF 4-H CLUBS
4-H FORESTRY CLUB WORK

A radio talk by W. K. Williams, U. S. Department of Agriculture, delivered in the National 4-H club radio program, January 8, 1938, and broadcast by a network of associate NBC radio stations.

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

Young people want to know the outdoors of their home neighborhood. They are eager to learn about the fields and streams, the hills and mountains. They want to know the names of trees and shrubs and flowers, ~~birds and animals~~, and learn how they live and grow. 4-H forestry work with farm boys and girls satisfies some of these longings. It unfolds many of these interesting things about nature and teaches how they play a part in human life and progress.

So forestry, with its many interesting phases, is a very alluring subject to 4-H members. Leaders have made it even more attractive by developing simplified projects gauged to the interests of the junior age group. The local leadership in forestry is continually better informed and extension agents year by year give more assistance in the projects.

Under the direction of county extension agents and volunteer club leaders 4-H forestry members have learned to identify trees, collect tree seeds, make seed beds and grow small transplant trees in the home garden. Thousands of club members have planted trees for future timber crops, for windbreak protection around farm homes or rural schools. Many others have conducted demonstrations showing how to thin, weed or prune young timber stands. Conservation and forestry camps have been held in Michigan, Massachusetts and other States. These have given farm boys and girls a chance to study nature in the deep woods and to map and cruise timber areas. Likewise, forestry judging contests conducted in New Hampshire and the establishment of school forests, community forests and 4-H forests in Wisconsin, Michigan and New York, have given club members practical experience in forestry. Educational tours to study wildlife found in the forest and to observe the results of fire, insects and other things that destroy the forest have had a tremendous appeal to club members. They have also visited logging camps, well managed woodlands, sawmills and other wood-using plants. In these plants they have seen rough timber made into pulp and paper or sawlogs made into boards, and other products. Such activities have helped the boys and girls understand the meaning of forestry as well as suggested practical ideas which they may apply to the home woods.

In some of the Southern States 4-H forestry club members have learned how to handle the farm woods for continuous growth, how to make close use of timber and market it properly, the need for and value of fire protection and how forestry may increase the farm income. The planting of trees on badly gullied farm lands as carried on by 4-H members in Mississippi and other States is an example of interest which rural youth has in conserving soil values and in maintaining a more permanent agriculture.

Of course, the training of the members is the major purpose of 4-H forestry work. But, the work also has an immediate dollars-and-cents value. It preserves and develops the forestry resources of the States and of the Nation. Recently the extension forester of Ohio gave me some facts which illustrate this point. He told me this:

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In the last 10 years 1,760 boys and girls in Ohio have enrolled in tree planting projects and have planted 1,800,000 trees. If all these trees had been planted in one field or block they would have reforested a solid area of nearly 2,000 acres. Let us try to visualize just what this means in future returns to farms over a period of 50 years. It is conservatively estimated that the timber production on this area of land for the period indicated would be 36,000,000 feet. This quantity of timber would supply sufficient lumber to build or replace 1,200 barns or completely furnish an adequate lumber supply for 450 sets of farm buildings, including house, barn, garage, and storage buildings. While growing to maturity these trees not only furnish lumber, posts and fuelwood for the farm, but also are protecting soils from washing and eroding, conserving soil moisture, and adding valuable cover to the land for wildlife and game propagation. Many of these trees planted in Ohio are also now serving as valuable shelterbelts and windbreaks to buildings and farm crops.

Let us look at what has been done in New York State. In that State the extension forester reports that in 12 years 4-H club members have planted 10,000,000 trees. It takes about 1,000 trees to plant an acre for timber production which means that 4-H Club members in New York have reforested 10,000 acres. Think of what it means to youth, to the farm and to the State to put idle lands to work and of the significance which this program has in furthering forestry education among farm people.

During 1938 4-H forestry will probably expand considerably under the skilled guidance of agricultural agents and local leaders, farm youth will further develop their appreciation of woodlands and will acquire a practical knowledge of forestry practices.

If any farm boys or girls listening today have an interest in 4-H forestry and wish to take part in this work during the year, I would suggest that you consult your county agricultural agent.

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